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GOLD

going for the

Billie Ortiz

Whenever a dreamer shares a dream and specifically uses the word “gold,” I take particular notice because I know dreams never take the symbol of gold lightly. Gold for centuries has been recognized as a most precious metal all over the world. Since gold does not tarnish, it is associated with incorruptibility, immortality and the luminous power of the sun. Because gold has always carried such value and importance in our human history, this symbol of preciousness lives within our

collective unconscious and appears often in our dreams, myths and fairy tales.

Gold symbolically represents our inner resilience, spiritual radiance and innate perfection. The power that we came into the world with lies deep within us like forgotten buried treasure waiting to be uncovered. As Robert Bly explains in his book *Iron John*, “The promise is rediscovery, a rediscovery of the gold that was always there. The gold that was in us while we were in the womb.”

In the stages of alchemy (an ancient, metaphorical outline for inner transformation) gold represents the noblest of elements: the dark material that we have brought forth from the unconscious layers of our psyche and purified through “cooking in the well-sealed vessel.” By holding this rising unconscious content firmly in awareness through meditation, active imagination or dreamwork, we begin the process of allowing the power trapped by denial within our shadow to be freed and brought into the light of consciousness.

The first stage is encountering the personal shadow, the *prima materia*. Here we acknowledge all the repressed experiences of our personal life history. In the next stage, the *nigredo* or “the blackening,” we encounter the non-personal, ancestral layer, the collective shadow common to us all. The next stage is the *albedo* or “the whitening,” where the *prima materia*, after being washed by “dew” or tears, is pulverized again and again, through many layers, eventually turning into pure silver. One of the final stages is “the yellowing,” when the silver is ultimately sacrificed in order for it to change into gold.

Therefore, from an alchemical point of view, when the symbol of gold shows up, our psyche has been cooked, burned, pulverized, washed with tears and ultimately transformed into something brilliant and precious. The gold represents all of our difficult and focused inner work. Craig Chalquist sums this up in *Cooking for the Collective Unconscious: An Alchemically Enlivened Recipe*, “We know the Self, a conscious-unconscious entity, can enfold into awareness raw products of the psyche. When the shadow, for instance, enters awareness, its savagery evolves into passion. The ego changes the products of the unconscious and it in turn is changed by them. Gold symbolizes these changed products.”



Judy Miller Dienst

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This technique is being
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Judy has taught students
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